

APPLICATION FOR
UNITED STATES PATENT
IN THE NAME OF
Christina Corral

For

MULTI-PURPOSE RECREATIONAL BLANKET

Prepared By:

Haight, Brown & Bonesteel LLP
6080 Center Drive, Suite 800
Los Angeles, California 90045-1574
(310) 215-7100

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MULTI-PURPOSE RECREATIONAL BLANKET

CROSS-REFERENCED AND RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present patent application is related to the following provisional patent application:

- 5 1. Multi-Purpose Recreational Blanket, Corral,
Christina; Application Serial No. 60/417696.

Accordingly, Applicant hereby claims priority and benefit of the above U.S. Provisional Patent Application pursuant to 35 *USC* § 119(e), § 120, and all other applicable statutes and law.

10 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

Field of Invention

The present invention relates to multi-purpose recreational blankets, and more particularly, to multi-purpose recreational blankets that can be easily transported, provide a flat, clean surface to lie on, and contain one or more convenient storage pockets to carry
15 miscellaneous items.

Description of the Prior Art

Given busy modern work trends, people more and more resort to spending time in
20 the outdoors for the purposes of recreation, and to counteract the effects of stress and congestion. As part of this process, people often want to relax themselves by lying down. Whether at the beach, the lake, or the forest, people place blankets and like items between themselves and the ground to avoid dirtying themselves and to provide comfort. While many types of these blankets and towels are found in the prior art, serious deficiencies
25 nonetheless persist.

Where beach blankets are used, normally a number of other items are taken along as well. For example, these items may include food and water, tape and CD players, radios, clothing, shoes, papers, books, writing instruments, snorkels and fins, suntan lotion, first aid kits, and countless other items. Carrying a recreational blanket along, with the items listed above, can be cumbersome and challenging. These items are often carried separately and therefore encumber the outdoors person, particularly when long walks or hikes are involved. Often more than one trip is required to bring all the desirable and necessary items to a location. Further, once settled at a location, the contents of separate backpacks, purses or bags must be searched and thus put in disorder to locate needed or desired items. Naturally, these items must then be repacked when leaving the locale.

To address the above limitations, certain inventions have attempted to combine these blankets and towels with storage and handling means. However, nothing in the prior art successfully addresses the above limitations in an efficient and effective framework.

For example, the reference to Lewis, U.S. Pat. No. 5,481,767, discloses a multi-purpose blanket adapted for use at the beach, picnics and various sporting events comprising a pillow, wraparound support carrier, and storage pockets. This reference also discloses shoulder straps to transport the device. However, a number of limitations exist with this reference.

First, the wraparound support carrier limitation greatly reduces the efficiency of this invention. This element is rather cumbersome and has little to no purpose when the blanket is being used. Furthermore, the plurality of small storage pockets cannot be used

to carry larger items such as shoes, beach toys, and the like. Also, any items stored in the storage pockets of the wraparound support carrier must be taken out prior to folding the invention. Accordingly, this reference does not allow for storage of items when the blanket is transported.

5 Additionally, there will be a tendency for the wraparound support carrier to become detached from the blanket portion of this invention after repeated use. Also, the requirement of multiple and precise folds to store this invention results in inconvenience and, where patience and time is short such as at the beach, ineffective portability. Finally, the pillow claimed in this reference is detached during transport from all other
10 elements and therefore may be easily lost.

 The reference to Casey, U.S. Pat. No. 5,737,785, has similar limitations. This reference discloses a pocket-containing towel and blanket for securely storing and carrying loose items to and from the beach or swimming pool. This reference includes a blanket, plurality of side pockets, a pillow pocket, and a securing/carrying strap. Because
15 the storage pockets are placed around the periphery of the blanket, the blanket surface area is limited and necessarily results in the user lying and/or rolling over the storage pockets. While this reference comprises a pillow pocket, the pillow is not claimed. It would be a separately introduced item. The added pillow cannot be transported with the device in the stored, folded position and because it is separate, it can be easily lost.
20 Furthermore, the securing strap and carrying strap can easily become undone as the binding portion, made of Velcro, is only at the ends of the straps. Also, because these straps are of separate construction from the blanket, they may easily become detached after continued use of the device. Finally, the storage pockets are relatively small in size

and cannot be used to carry items while the blanket is in the folded position. Finally, and as with the previous reference, the requirement of multiple, precise folds greatly compromises the utility and convenience of this device.

The reference to Anderson, U.S. Pat. No. 5,887,301, discloses a convertible
5 blanket and carrier having a rectangular main section, a single pocket, handles, and a blanket fastener. This reference fails to disclose a pillow or pillow pocket rendering this invention inconvenient and uncomfortable to use. Furthermore, the pocket disclosed has little definition and is essentially accessed through a number of little slots formed on the cover. In such case, items placed within the pockets are easily disturbed and difficult to
10 reach. Furthermore, continued access through these slots will result in tearing or ripping of the slots rendering the pocket useless. Also, items stored in these pockets will be difficult to see and access thereby further compromising this invention. Because the handles are made of distinct material from the blanket, they will have a tendency to become separated. Finally, the blanket fastener limitation renders this reference
15 inefficient and can easily become involuntarily unattached give its limited strength due to the small Velcro strip disclosed.

Accordingly, it is desirable to have a multi-purpose blanket that incorporates the above features, but at the same time, addresses the problems of convenience and portability in a more effective and efficient manner than found in the prior art. Further, it
20 is desirable to have a device that addresses the problems found in the prior art in an efficient and effective manner. However, and in view of the foregoing, nothing in the prior art addresses these deficiencies.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a multi-purpose blanket that serves as a lying pad and a means to store and transport desirable and necessary items. The present invention combines a number of desirable features all housed in an efficient, portable, and
5 convenient device.

In one embodiment, the present invention comprises an underside made of strong material such as tarp, rip-stop nylon, or plastic canvas. Attached and reinforced to the underside is a lying pad on which users can lie. The area between the underside and the lying pad forms a storage compartment. A break in the attachment between the underside
10 and the lying pad allows the user to insert and access various items that are placed there in-between. The lying pad is may be made of mesh material, or other see-through material, so that items can be easily accounted for and accessed. The lying pad is preferably of a size slightly larger than the underside, and may also incorporate pleats, so that the lying pad may expand without breakage or compromise as items are inserted in-
15 between the lying pad and the underside. The present invention may also comprise a top pocket with a seal to carry items that are of immediate or frequent need such as keys, wallets, money, and the like.

Straps or handles are attached and reinforced to the present invention so that it may easily be pulled by its users across the sand. It is anticipated that the present
20 invention may be made in a number of different sizes, shapes, configurations and colors. For example, the present invention may be of rectangular, square, round, oval or of other shape. Further, the present invention may be sized for suitability for adult users, multiple adult users, or for children.

Because items of all sizes may be stored in-between the underside and lying pad, the present invention is extremely versatile. Further, because all items may be stored in the present invention at one time, users need only make one trip across the sand, without the need of wasting time making multiple trips back and forth to collect various items.

5 The present invention is, therefore, extremely useful to its users. It is lightweight, durable, and because of its efficiency, the present invention helps relieve stresses associated with travel and recreation. The present invention may be folded up by virtue of its straps, or in the alternative, may be fit into a carry-bag when not in use. The straps may be left out when folding the blanket thereby forming an external carry-strap making
10 the present invention extremely portable and easy to use.

An alternative embodiment of the present invention comprises a multi-purpose blanket having two distinct sides. On one side is a lying pad which further may comprise a pillow holder and optional blowup pillow device. Handles, conveniently placed at the periphery of the lying pad may be formed of material integral with the lying pad or of
15 separate reinforced material. In a preferred embodiment, one or more handles are geometrically placed to provide the most convenient and effective means to move the present invention from one place to another.

The second side of this alternative embodiment of the present invention consists of a storage unit. A plurality of compartments are housed therein such that desirable
20 items including food and water, tape and CD players, radios, clothing, shoes, papers, books, writing instruments, snorkels and fins, suntan lotion, drink/food coolers, first aid kits, and countless other items may be conveniently and securely stored and transported. A mesh cover allows the items therein to be easily seen, and therefore readily accessed,

by the user. In one preferred embodiment, the storage unit contains two handle openings, so that the handles positioned on the lying pad portion of the present invention can pass through to the backside of the storage unit.

Velcro, or some other desirable closing device, partially surrounds the periphery
5 of the lying pad and the storage unit. The lying pad and the storage unit may be separate pieces, integral at one side or otherwise connected. By folding the storage unit over the lying pad, the present invention may be easily stored or transported. Once the storage unit is folded over the lying pad, the periphery Velcro serves as a further means to connect the two sides together and avoid spillage of items stored within. The
10 geometrically positioned handles may be used by one or more users in order to most efficiently drag and move the blanket and its contents. In situations where the storage unit is heavily loaded, multiple handles may be used by two or more person to effectively and efficiently transport the present invention and its contents.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a new and improved
15 multi-purpose recreational blanket that has all the advantages of the prior art, yet none of the disadvantages. It is a further object of the present invention to provide a new and improved multi-purpose recreational blanket that may be easily and efficiently manufactured and marketed. It is yet a further object of the present invention to provide a new and improved multi-purpose recreational blanket that is of durable and reliable
20 construction.

Another further object of the present invention to provide a new and improved multi-purpose recreational blanket that is of low cost to manufacture with regard to both materials and labor, and which, accordingly, is then susceptible of low prices of sale to

the consuming public, thereby making the present invention economically available to the buying public.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved multi-purpose recreational blanket that is portable and can be used in a myriad of
5 locations and situations.

The present invention may be better understood by referring to the following Detailed Description, which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. The Detailed Description of a particular preferred embodiment, described below, is intended to be a particular example, and not a limitation.

10 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of the specification, illustrate presently preferred embodiments of the present invention, and together with the preceding general description and the following Detailed Description, explain the principles of the present invention.

15 In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is an illustration of the underside of a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 2 is an illustration of the lying pad of a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

20 **FIGURE 3** is an illustration of an alternative preferred embodiment of the present invention in the open position.

FIGURE 4 is an illustration of an alternative preferred embodiment of the present invention in the open position.

FIGURE 5 is an illustration of an alternative preferred embodiment of the present invention in the closed position.

FIGURE 6 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention in the stored position.

5 **FIGURE 7** is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention in the open position.

FIGURE 8A is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention where the shape of the invention is round.

FIGURE 8B is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention
10 illustrating a folding pattern for the round embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 8C is an illustration of the preferred embodiment of the present invention in the folded configuration.

FIGURE 8D is a side view of the preferred embodiment of the present invention in the folded configuration.

15 **FIGURE 8E** is a front view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention in the folded configuration.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments consistent with the present invention address the need for an efficient multi-purpose recreational blanket. While the prior art attempts to address this
20 need, only the present invention provides a device and method that incorporates all the above characteristics. The device and method described herein may be implemented in a variety of manners. Accordingly, the description of a particular embodiment herein is intended only for the purposes of example, and not as a limitation.

FIGURE 1 is an illustration of the underside of a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment, the present invention comprises an underside (3) made of strong material such as tarp, rip-stop nylon, or plastic canvas.

FIGURE 2 illustrates the lying pad (2) of this preferred embodiment of the present invention on which users can lie. An attachment device (8), such a Velcro,
5 reinforces the underside (3) to the lying pad (2). The area between the underside and the lying pad forms a storage compartment (4). A break in the attachment device (8) between the underside (3) and the lying pad (2) allows the user to insert and access various items that are placed there in-between. The lying pad (2) may be made of mesh
10 material, or other see-through material, so that items can be easily accounted for and accessed. The lying pad (2) is preferably of a size slightly larger than the underside (3), and may also incorporate pleats, so that the lying pad (2) may expand without breakage or compromise as items are inserted in-between the lying pad (2) and the underside (3). The present invention may also comprise a top pocket (10) with a seal (11) designed to
15 carry items that are of immediate or frequent need such as keys, wallets, money, and the like.

Straps or handles (15, 15a) are attached and reinforced to the present invention so that it may easily be pulled by its users across the sand. The straps or handles (15, 15a) are reinforced, preferably to the underside (3). It is anticipated that the present invention
20 may be made in a number of different sizes, shapes, configurations and colors. For example, the present invention may be of rectangular, square, round, oval or of other shape. Further, the present invention may be sized for suitability for adult users, multiple adult users, or for children.

Because items of all sizes may be stored in-between the underside (3) and lying pad (2), the present invention is extremely versatile. Further, because all items may be stored in the present invention at one time, users need only make one trip across the sand, without the need of wasting time making multiple trips back and forth to collect various items. The present invention is, therefore, extremely useful to its users. It is lightweight, durable, and because of its efficiency, the present invention helps relieve stresses associated with travel and recreation. The present invention may be folded up by virtue of its straps or handles (15, 15a), or in the alternative, may be fit into a carry-bag when not in use. The straps or handles (15, 15a) may be left out when folding the blanket thereby forming an external carry-strap making the present invention extremely portable and easy to use.

FIGURE 3 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention in the open position. In this preferred embodiment, the recreational blanket (1) comprises two sides adjacent. Namely, these are the lying pad (2) and the storage compartment (4). The lying pad (2) may comprise a large lying area (10) and a series of pillow pockets (20, 25) where pillows can be secured for the lying comfort of the user. In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the pillow pockets house one or more blow-up pillows (not pictured) that can be used with greater ease.

At one end of the lying pad (2) are one or more handles (15, 15a, 15b) that can be used to pull and transport the recreational blanket (1) and its contents. In the preferred embodiment, these handles (15, 15a, 15b) are made of strong, resilient material and are positioned in a triangular configuration. As such, the recreational blanket may be

transported by one person pulling the center handle (15), or by as many as two other persons who would pull from the remaining side handles (15a, 15b).

The storage compartment (4) of the recreational blanket (1) may comprise a mesh cover (50). Underneath the mesh cover (50) are a series of multi-shaped pockets and storage units housed in a see-through plastic jacket (60). The storage units (not pictured) allow storage of useful items such as food and water, tape and CD players, radios, clothing, shoes, papers, books, writing instruments, snorkels and fins, suntan lotion, first aid kits, and countless other items. The mesh cover (50) protects the plastic jacket (60), while the plastic jacket (60) allows the user to easily see and obtain particular items stored without the need of going through every pocket.

A fastener (30), such as a zipper or Velcro device, adorns the external periphery of the recreational blanket (1) so that the storage side (4) may be securely folded over onto the lying pad (2) for transportation purposes. A pair of openings (55a, 55b) located on the storage compartment (4) allow the side handles (15a, 15b) of the lying pad (2) to respectively pass through to the outside of the storage compartment (4) when the recreational blanket (1) is in the closed position (See Figure 3).

FIGURE 4 is an illustration of an alternative preferred embodiment of the present invention in the open position. In this embodiment, the storage compartment (4) is positioned to the left of the lying pad (2). Generally, all elements described above remain the same.

FIGURE 5 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention in the closed position. In this Figure, the side handles (15a, 15b) penetrate the openings (55a, 55b) and allow easy access to users for transportation.

FIGURE 6 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention in the stored position. Because of the ability to manufacture the present invention with relatively light-weight, flexible material, when no items are stored therein, the recreational blanket (1) may be compresses into a convenient carrying case (100). A
5 strap (110) connected to the carrying case (100) further simplifies transportation of the recreational blanket (1). Also, the inclusion of transparent sides and pockets disposed within said carrying case (100) further facilitates use of the present invention.

FIGURE 7 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention in the open position. In this embodiment, alternate positioning of the handles (16, 16a, 16b)
10 is illustrated. Because the center handle (16) and side handles (16a, 156b) are positioned on the exterior of the lying side (2), the need for openings (55a, 55b) is eliminated.

FIGURE 8A is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of the present invention where the shape of the lying pad is round. Other shapes are anticipated in the present invention including without limitation rectangular, square, and oval. FIGURE 8B depicts
15 a preferable manner of folding the recreational blanket (1). FIGURE 8C is an illustration of the preferred embodiment of the present invention in the folded configuration.

FIGURE 8D is a side view of the preferred embodiment of the present invention in the folded configuration. FIGURE 8E is a front view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention in the folded configuration.

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